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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: SADR RENEWS CALL FOR IRAQI UNITY, WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN
TROOPS

CLASSIFIED BY: MARK G. DAVISON, LEADER, PRT NAJAF, NEA-I/REO AL
HILLAH, DEPT. OF STATE.
REASON: 1.4 (b)

¶1. (C) Summary. December 11, Muqtada Al Sadr issued a statement outlining his issues with United States presence in Iraq. Sadr decried what he sees as the systematic destruction of Iraqi society by the twin demons of the United States and Ba'athists. He repeated his call for the withdrawal or ouster of all foreign forces in Iraq. The self-styled cleric lay at the feet of coalition forces, responsibility for bombings, murder and the internal displacement of Shia, among other allegations. He insisted, finally, that a failure to adhere to his demands would lead to a war between the "invasion" on one side and God and the prophet on the other. End summary.

¶2. (C) Referring to coalition forces as "the invasion", political figure and militia leader Muqtada Al Sadr issued a statement December 11 which detailed his grievances with a number of groups. Most notably, Sadr singled out the United States' effort in Iraq and the Ba'athists. Sadr blamed, "Bombings, killings, terrorism, arrests, displacement, torture in the jails and suppression of media and religion" on what he termed "western corruptors." He stated that Coalition Forces were sent to control the lives of the believers. Even striking a mocking tone to belittle his apparent foes. "Give the invasion a chance," he claims many plead. "Give the Ba'athists a chance," he recalled as another common entreaty. "What has been the result?" he asked rhetorically. Recalling attacks in the market at Sadria in Baghdad and the December 9 vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack in Karbala, Sadr claimed that Iraq had become a testing ground for western weapons and that the only goal of coalition forces was to divide and terminate the Iraqi people.

¶3. (C) In an apparent allusion to the recent meeting between SCIRI leader Abdul Aziz Al Hakim and President George Bush, Sadr noted with disingenuous surprise that the enemies of yesterday had become the friends of today. "We need honorable Iraqi hands to move the country to a prosperous stage," asserted Sadr. No one has the right to allow the occupation to stay in Iraq except the nation itself, he noted. (Note. Sadr appears concerned that a deal may have been brokered between Al Hakim and President Bush.) Finally, calling on religious, political, academic and public figures to demand the withdrawal of coalition forces or at the very least a schedule for withdrawal, Sadr threatened that a war between the west and God would be the result of the continued presence of coalition forces in Iraq.

¶4. (C) Comment. The majority of the rhetoric in Sadr's latest statement mirrors his now familiar, oft repeated call for change in Iraq. His apparent questioning of Abdul Aziz Al Hakim signals Sadr's intent to position himself and the Office of the Martyr Sadr as the only true Iraqi nationalists. It is no coincidence that throughout the statement he calls on a wide

spectrum of Iraqis to stand up to what he sees as an illegal occupation. Whether Sadr wants or needs an ally in his continued quest for political power it seems clear that he believes his greatest strength is in the Iraqi people and his greatest asset the ability to speak to them directly. End comment.

VIERGUTZ